

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are pending in this application after entry of this amendment. Claim 13 has been amended. Support for this amendment can be found in Figs. 1 through 3 and the supporting description in the specification. Claim 15 is new and adds an additional feature found in Figs. 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11.

Applicants have amended the specification to include the specific reference to the prior filed US provisional application No. 60/156,243, filed September 27, 1999, to which this application claims priority. Also, in support thereof, applicants submit herewith a substitute inventor's declaration identifying this priority claim. Priority to this provisional application was claimed in the international stage of this application, as is indicated in the bibliographic information on the front page of the published international application. Applicants kindly request the Examiner to acknowledge this priority claim.

Rejection of Claims 1-12

Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9, 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Burrows, US 6,217,405. Claims 4, 8 and 10 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious over a combination of Burrows and either Mitchell, US 6,113,454 or Eppley, US 6,099,379. Burrows issued on April 17, 2001, which is after the effective filing date of the present application. Burrows was filed on March 3, 1999, which is before the filing date of the provisional application to which this application claims priority.

Applicants have submitted herewith a Declaration of Ferenc Fekete Under 37 CFR § 1.131 (hereinafter "Fekete Declaration"). In the Fekete Declaration, inventor Fekete states

that his invention was conceived prior to March 3, 1999, which is prior to the filing date of Burrows. The exhibits attached to the declaration describe the progress of the conception of the invention and the efforts to diligently reduce the invention to practice. The Declaration and the exhibits describe all the features of the invention that the Examiner asserts are disclosed in Burrows as being conceived by the inventors prior to March 3, 1999. The Fekete Declaration states that all dates and information from which dates may be derived have been redacted from the attached exhibits. In addition, the undersigned attorney states that in Exhibit I, information that may be considered confidential attorney-client privileged information has also been redacted.

Based on the Fekete Declaration and the above remarks, Applicants submit that Burrows should be removed as a prior art reference, and that Claims 1-12 be allowed.

Rejection of Claims 13-14

Claim 13 was rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by UK Publication No. GB 876054 (hereinafter UK '054). Claim 14 was rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious over a combination of UK '054 and Lee, US 6,170,354. UK '054 was published on August 30, 1961. Lee was issued on January 9, 2001, which is after the effective filing date of the present application. Lee was filed on July 20, 1999, which is before the filing date of the provisional application to which this application claims priority.

With regard to Claim 13, this claim has been amended to clarify the scope of the claim. As amended, Claim 13 distinguishes the steering wheel assembly of UK '054 with a two-wheel offset alignment, and instead requires one wheel in non-offset vertical alignment.

UK '054 does not disclose or suggest a steering wheel assembly with one wheel in a non-offset vertical alignment with the wheel assembly pivot axis. Therefore, Claim 13 is not anticipated by UK '054, and should be allowed.

With regard to Claim 14, for the reasons noted above, the enclosed Declaration of Ferenc Fekete Under 37 CFR § 1.131 is effective to remove Lee as a prior art reference. Accordingly Claim 14 should also be allowed, notwithstanding that it depends from allowable Claim 13.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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